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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 19 November 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

While the Security Council remains paralysed, unable to speak or act with one voice, the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory rages on. With unbridled impunity, Israel, the occupying Power, is intensifying military assaults against the Gaza Strip, killing, wounding and maiming Palestinian civilians, including babies, children, women, men and elderly persons. The Palestinian death toll continues to rise. At least 102 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces and more than 850 people, hundreds of them children, have been injured in this latest military campaign.

Israeli war planes continue to deliberately target densely populated civilian areas in Gaza, with more than 1,300 missile strikes reportedly carried out in the past week in addition to artillery bombardment of civilian areas, including several refugee camps. War crimes are being perpetrated by the occupying Power against the Palestinian civilian population in broad daylight. Article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention defines grave breaches as, inter alia, the wilful killing and inhuman treatment of protected persons, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health of protected persons, and extensive destruction of property unlawfully and wantonly, all of which are being perpetrated by Israel. These are war crimes and this is State terrorism.

Innocent children are being killed in their homes and in the streets, and houses are being destroyed atop entire families. Among the many brutally killed by Israel in the past 48 hours in Gaza are the following children:

Tamer Salameh Abu Esei'fan, age 3

Tasneem Zuheir Al-Nahhal, age 9

Joumana Salameh Abu Esei'fan, age 1

Mohammed Eyad Abu Zour, age 5

Eyad Abu Khusa, age 18 months

Rama Al-Shandi, age 1

Mo'men Suheil Hamada, age 15 (who was killed with his father, Suheil Hamada)

Hussein Jalal Nasser, age 8 (who was killed with his father, Jalal Nasser)

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Further, 11 members of one family, the Al-Dalou family, were massacred by an Israeli air assault on the Al-Nasr neighborhood in Gaza City that struck their home. At this time, one child of the family also remains missing under the rubble. The dead are:

Ibrahim Mohammed Al-Dalou, age 1

Jamal Mohammed Al-Dalou, age 7

Sarah Mohammed Al-Dalou, age 7

Yousef Mohammed Al-Dalou, age 10

Ranin Mohammed Al-Dalou, age 5

Samah Al-Dalou, age 25

Mohammed Jamal Al-Dalou

Tahani Al-Dalou, age 46

Sulafa Al-Dalou, age 50

Abdullah Al-Mzanner, age 23

Amina Matar Al-Mzanner, age 83

We ask the international community: what crime did these infants and children commit? What crimes were committed by their parents, many of whom died while trying desperately to protect their children? Why are they being targeted for death by Israel, the occupying Power? They committed no crimes. They are innocent and they and their families have lived the entirety of their lives under Israel's illegitimate military occupation and cruel blockade, never knowing a moment of human security, peace or dignity in this tortured existence of life under Israeli oppression.

At this moment, Israel's air assaults continue, with attacks today on Gaza City's Al-Zeitoun neighborhood killing another three people, including Ahed Al-Qattaty, age 38, who has left behind a pregnant wife, 5 young daughters and a son, and killed a 2-year-old boy. Journalists are also being directly targeted. Panic and trauma are spreading among the Palestinian civilian population, who are denied the protection to which they are entitled under international humanitarian law, as Israel wreaks death, destruction and terror on Gaza once again.

Israeli reprisals against the Palestinian people are also occurring in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, where the occupying forces continue to use excessive force against civilians, causing death and injury and further destabilizing the situation. Such force has been unleashed against non-violent protestors in the West Bank demonstrating in solidarity with their besieged brethren in Gaza. Among the victims of this Israeli brutality are Najeeb Ahmed Najeeb, a 20-month-old baby, who died of tear gas burns sustained at Qaladiya checkpoint near Ramallah, and Rashad Al-Tamimi, who died of wounds sustained yesterday when he was struck at a protest in Nabi Saleh near Ramallah. Also, there are reports of live ammunition being used by the occupying forces against Palestinian protestors in Al-Khalil.

The international community cannot justify remaining on the sidelines while the crisis, particularly in the Gaza Strip, continues to escalate and civilians continue to die. Israel, the occupying Power, must be demanded to immediately cease this military campaign against the Palestinian people. The Security Council must uphold its Charter duties for this crisis is clearly of relevance to international peace and security. We also underscore the importance of the appeals made by the Secretary-General, on behalf of the United Nations, for the protection of civilian life and the importance of his visit to the region in this context, as well as the importance of the efforts being exerted by other concerned parties, especially Egypt, to bring an end to the violence and suffering.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 441 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 17 November 2012 (A/ES-10/569-S/2012/852) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations